

THE SPECTRUM OF Equine Fear, Anxiety, and Stress

SEVERE SIGNS OF FAS WITH AGGRESSION (FAS LEVEL 5)

- All signs described in Level 4 with active aggressive behaviors directed towards team members such as striking, kicking, barging, or biting

SEVERE SIGNS OF FAS WITHOUT AGGRESSION (FAS LEVEL 4)

- Ears pinned back, raised head and neck, whites of eyes showing, increased respiration, snapping tail, constant movement and full-body muscle tension, possibly distant calling, snort, or blow vocalizations
- Avoidance of touch, constant fidgeting or stomping/pawing, animated escape/avoidance behavior such as rearing, bolting, barging
- Appears to ignore team members

MODERATE SIGNS (FAS LEVEL 3)

- Frequent ear rotation, raising head and neck, white of eye showing, snapping tail movements, increased restlessness and muscle tension
- Freezing behavior with reduced movement but increased full-body muscle tension
- Likely refuse treats or grab treats roughly. Unlikely to interact with team members and may begin showing restless fidgeting or active escape/avoidance and intolerance of procedures (e.g. moving away from team members, fidgeting, stomping/pawing, head shaking, rearing)

MILD-MODERATE SIGNS (FAS LEVEL 2)

- Frequent ear rotation, raised head and neck, increased tail movements, increased restlessness and muscle tension
- Reduced Interest in interacting with team members or in treats or scratching, but without active escape or avoidance behaviors

MILD/SUBTLE SIGNS (FAS LEVEL 1)

- Increased ear rotation, slightly raised neck, small hoof movements, self-grooming behaviors, increased head movements towards or away from team members but not moving body away
- Might solicit treats/scratching and interact with team members, or appear curiously interested in them

RELAXED (FAS LEVEL 0)

- Relaxed standing rest
- Head, neck, and ears in neutral position, muscles relaxed, eyes soft, normally responsive to environmental stimuli
- Solicits interaction, appears curious about and willing to interact with team members when approached

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FAS LEVEL 4-5

FAS LEVEL 2-3

FAS LEVEL 0-1